

REMARKS

Claims 1-4, 6-13 and 15-20 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 16, 17 and 20 are amended. Support for the amendments to claims 1, 16 and 17 can be found at least in Fig. 7 and in the specification, for example, at page 11, lines 10-19. Claim 20 is amended for form. No new matter is added.

I. Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication that claim 20 is allowed. However, for at least the reasons discussed below, all of the pending claims are in condition for allowance.

II. The Claims Define Patentable Subject Matter

Claims 1-4, 9, 13 and 15-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Sasaki et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0056961) in view of Fujiwara (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0164317); claims 6-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Sasaki in view of Fujiwara and further in view of Ishiduka et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,217,019); and claims 10-12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Sasaki in view of Fujiwara and in further view of Ishiduka. The rejections are respectfully traversed.

None of the above-applied references teaches or renders obvious every claimed feature of independent claims 1, 16 and 17. None of the above-applied references teaches or renders obvious "the side part ... includes at least a separately detachable first part and a separately detachable second part," as recited in independent claims 1, 16 and 17 (emphasis added).

The Office Action asserts that the cutouts 23, 25 of Sasaki or the cover part 2 of Fujiwara correspond to the claimed side part (including first and second parts) of independent claims 1, 16 and 17 (see Office Action, pages 2 and 3). However, the cutouts 23, 25 of Sasaki and the cover part 2 of Fujiwara do not include two separate "first and second parts"

that are independently detachable from one another (see Fig. 1 of Sasaki and Fig. 3 of Fujiwara). Therefore, Sasaki and Fujiwara do not teach or render obvious a side part including a separately detachable first part and second part, as recited in independent claims 1, 16 and 17.

Further, the applied references do not teach or render obvious "the fold-back part is folded outwardly at the fold line," as recited in independent claims 1, 16 and 17 (emphasis added).

The Office Action asserts that the push plate 11h of Sasaki corresponds to the claimed fold-back part of independent claims 1, 16 and 17 (see Office Action, page 8). However, the push plate 11h of Sasaki is bent so as to lie underneath the top plate 11a to bias against the recording sheets 12 so that the recording sheets 12 may tightly contact one another (see paragraphs [0077] and [0082] of Sasaki). In other words, the alleged fold-back part of Sasaki is folded inwardly at the alleged fold line (see Fig. 2 of Sasaki). Therefore, the alleged fold-back part of Sasaki is not folded outwardly at the fold line, as recited in independent claims 1, 16 and 17.

Fujiwara and Ishiduka do not remedy the above-described deficiencies of Sasaki.

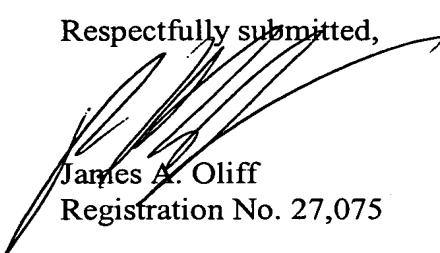
Therefore, for at least these reasons, independent claims 1, 16 and 17 are patentable over Sasaki, Fujiwara and Ishiduka. Claims 2-4, 6-13, 15, 18 and 19, which depend from independent claim 1, are also patentable for at least their dependency on independent claim 1, as well as for the additional features they recite. Applicants thus respectfully request withdrawal of the rejections.

III. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,


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